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AUTHOR Kuo, Ming-ming Shen
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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the impact of organizational change on a university library. The change process started in 1980 at Ball State University Libraries, Muncie, Indiana, with the initiation of a self-study, the Management Review and Analysis Program (MRAP). With certain key recommendations implemented, the University Libraries has been transformed from a divisional organizational structure with a broad span of control into a classical, hierarchical, functional structure in order to achieve greater efficiency and effectiveness, and to maintain its accountability in a changing environment. The effects of this change have become evident over the decade. This paper begins by summarizing theories on organizational change. An overview of the MRAP and the processes for its application and implementation are then described, and the libraries' organizational structures at the pre- and post-MRAP eras are contrasted. An analysis of the process and impact of organizational change in the context of selected organization theories in the management and public administration literature concludes the paper. (Author/MAB)

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The Impact of Planned Organizational Change on an Academic Library: An MRAP Case Study.

Ming-ming Shen Kuo

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The Impact of Planned Organizational Change on An Academic Library: An MRAP Case Study

Ming-ming Shen Kuo
Ball State University

Abstract

This paper examines the impact of organizational change on a university library. The change process started in 1980 at Ball State University Libraries, Muncie, Indiana, with the initiation of a self-study, the Management Review and Analysis Program. With certain key recommendations implemented, the University Libraries has been transformed from a divisional organizational structure with a broad span of control into a classical, hierarchical, functional structure. The effects of this change have become evident over the decade. The process and impact of change are here examined according to selected organization theories in management and public administration literature.

INTRODUCTION

The transitional, and often cyclic nature of a library self-study program may raise questions about its real impact on an organization undertaking this process. Some documented case studies are found as summary accounts for internal release or as journal articles; however, no longitudinal assessments of the real or perceived impact of library self-study have been published. This paper examines the impact of one such self-study

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-- the Management Review and Analysis Program (MRAP) -- on Ball State University Libraries. With the implementation of certain key recommendations of the MRAP study, the Ball State University Libraries has been transformed from a broad-based divisional organization structure into a classical, hierarchical, functional structure in order to achieve greater efficiency and effectiveness, and to maintain its accountability in a changing environment. The effects of this change have become evident in recent years.

The process and impact of this change are here explained according to theories on organizational change advocated by Robert T. Golembiewski, Herbert K. Kaufman, Peter F. Drucker and others. This case study illustrates the dynamics of change in a public service organization. It shows that at times the traditional bureaucratic characteristics of libraries are necessary to achieve organizational effectiveness and efficiency in a changing environment.

This paper is divided into four parts. First, theories on organizational change will be summarized. Second, an overview of the MRAP and the processes for its application and implementation at Ball State University Libraries will be described. Third, the organizational structures at the pre- and post-MRAP eras will be contrasted. Fourth, an analysis on the organizational change toward greater effectiveness and accountability to the changing environment is attempted.

THEORIES ON ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE

ORGANIZATIONAL HEALTH

Wilbur M. McFeely believes that organizational change is necessary for the health of all organizations. To the practical executive, organizational health is almost synonymous with organizational change. To the practical administrator, the health of the organization is measured by attained results. Organizational health can be equated with the organization's ability to formulate a suitable internal structure and work environment, and its ability to respond fittingly to the relevant external environment.[1]

The impact of major organizational change is seen in an organization's modified strategy, altered structure, and the different character of relationships among its principal components. Most important of all, the impact is seen in the obvious change of the organization's management mode.[2] All these characteristics are illustrated in the case study of Ball State University Libraries.

McFeely also points out the continuing and revitalizing nature of change. There is continuing need to "lock-in" the changes in the management system. There is need for consistency within the organization, the sharing of organizational purpose, aspiration, and thrust. Change is not only legitimate but also a continuing expectation. Change is innate in management's effort to upgrade the competency and effectiveness of organizations on a continuing basis.[3]

MECHANISM FOR CHANGE - OR CHANGE STRATEGIES

There are many ways to achieve organizational change. George E. Berkley identifies the following: planning, management information systems, interdepartmental committees, study commissions and task forces, and consultants.[4] In this case study, all of these agents of change were used at different stages, with the exception of management information systems.

SYSTEMATIC ABANDONMENT

For public service organizations, Peter F. Drucker proposes the change strategy of "sloughing off yesterday." He maintains that organizations need a systematic abandonment policy at all times but especially in time of turbulence. This strategy is used to abandon the products, services or ventures that only absorb resources but produce little results since all these have become "yesterday."[5]

AVOIDANCE OF SUNK COSTS OR REORGANIZATION

Herbert K. Kaufman suggests ways to offset systematic obstacles for change. One way is to try to avoid sunk costs (assets that can not be converted to other forms to adjust to changing conditions). Another way is to reorganize. Reorganization is often used as a change strategy. It is commonly defended and preferred in terms of rationalizing disorderly administrative arrangements, or streamlining, coordinating, and improving efficiency. It is effective in terms of redistributing influences and emphasizing different values.[6]

THE PROCESS OF ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE

The process of organizational change is seen in the following analytical order (or phase) of change:[7]

1. Initiation of Change: Most essential are: A sense of need for change on the part of those whose support is most vital in order to secure its adoption; A commitment on the part of the political leader to sustain through the adoption of change implementation; Availability of technical and professional leadership.
2. Design of flexible plans for change (by involving principal actors of an organization and using a realistic time table).
3. Adoption (using rationality, following the political mechanism of change, structure, process and seeking people's acceptance).
4. Implementation (with emphasis on the pace and responsibility for implementation).
5. Evaluation.

ALTERNATE MODELS FOR ORGANIZATION AFTER CHANGE

Robert T. Golembiewski presents two alternate models for organizing. These models are based upon structuring work according to four polarities: differentiation and integration; repression and freedom to act; stability and newness; function and flow of work.

One model is a classical structure consistent with values of bureaucracy with emphasis on differentiation, repression (control

of deviant individual behavior), stability, and function. It possesses the following underlying properties:[8]

- Authority is a vertical, or hierarchical relation.
- Departments are organized around the same or similar activities, called "functions" at high level of organization and "processes" at low level - "like" activities are grouped together.
- Only a relatively small number of people should report directly to any superior.

The other model is an alternate, "open" structure with emphasis on integration, freedom to act, change and flow of work. Its underlying properties are:[9]

- Authoritative relations occur up, down, and across the organization.
- Departmentalization reflects the flow of work.
- A relatively large number of people may report to any superior.

Bureaucratic features demonstrated in the first model had their origin in Max Weber's organization theory of bureaucracy described below.

ORGANIZATIONAL DYNAMICS IN WEBERIAN BUREAUCRACY

Max Weber, the German sociologist (1864-1920), considered bureaucracy as the most ideal form of organizational structure with its:

- hierarchical structure of formal authority;
- rules and regulations spelling out responsibilities

between levels and among positions;

- uniform, non-arbitrary and non-personal method of administering public affairs which ensures impartiality;
- emphasis on rationality;
- emphasis on employees' loyalty with an identity or culture in order to control their action; and
- emphasis on the written documents (the file) in the management of the office.[10]

Bureaucracy has dominated organizational structures throughout the ages, even today. It does not mean "red tape."

Antony Downs views bureaucracy as an organization with the following basic characteristics: large size; full-time membership and economic dependency of members; personnel hiring; promotion; and retention on a merit basis. He maintains that bureaucracy often denotes certain quality. It is not "all or nothing"; organizations can possess it to a greater or lesser degree.[11]

LIBRARIES AS BUREAUCRACIES

Beverly P. Lynch maintains libraries are bureaucracies. She believes that democratic principles can no longer prevail in an organization striving for efficiency and accountability. She observes that libraries which are structured in a flexible, democratic, and completely participatory style of work environment are generally inefficient.

Lynch believes that libraries should be designed to be as efficient as possible. Bureaucratic rules are not red tape.

These rules serve to control and to stabilize environmental influences, enabling the organization to deal with the environment in a more predictable and routine fashion.[12]

MANAGEMENT REVIEW AND ANALYSIS PROGRAM FOR ACADEMIC LIBRARIES

The Management Review and Analysis Program (MRAP) is one form of Academic Library Program designed as an internal organizational change strategy for academic libraries. In the late 1970's and 1980's, the Program was used to help libraries work through a process of review and improvement in order to strengthen their overall performance. It was designed by the Office of Management Studies of the Association of Research Libraries, which provides the consultant, the training, and the materials necessary for the review. The program consultant offers guidelines for the library to conduct an internal assessment of its many management practices in a comprehensive and systematic fashion.[13]

MRAP received a great deal of attention at the national level in the 1970's and early 1980's. The program was adopted by approximately thirty academic libraries with varying degrees of success. Symposia were held by experts from the Office of Management Studies of the Association of Research Libraries and administrators from various participating libraries.[14] The literature shows a number of documented accounts of MRAP, such as those at the University of Tennessee Libraries at Knoxville,[15] and the University of Connecticut Libraries.[16]

Within Indiana, Purdue University Libraries and Audio-Visual Center conducted a MRAP in the early 1970's,[17] and Indiana University Libraries also conducted its MRAP from August 1974 to January 1976.[18]

The wide-spread influence of MRAP even reached Canada and Australia. Its impact on libraries were also felt abroad with admiration and envy by some British librarians.[19]

STATE OF BALL STATE UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES BEFORE MRAP

Background

Ball State University Libraries provides information resources and services in support of teaching, research of the university, and general service to the community. During the MRAP, it employed 41 professional librarians with full faculty status and nine-month contractual assignments, 98 full time and 24 part-time classified support staff, and approximately 250 student assistants.

Administratively, the University Librarian had been reporting to a rapid succession of university administrators during years of unstable university governance. The library administration suffered under changing second-ranking university officers who often had their own particular interest and perception of how the Libraries should be organized. The Libraries had no voice in funding issues until 1979 when the Libraries were represented through the Dean for Academic Planning and Faculty Development. Prior to 1979, the University Libraries were not in a position to formally plan for its short and long range future

and was uninformed of where it stood in the funding priorities.

Organizational Structure Before MRAP

In 1980, the Libraries were organized with seven divisions (Information Sources, General Collections, Branch Libraries, Educational Resources, Collections Development, Processing, Continuations) reporting to the University Librarian. In addition, the Coordinator of a course-related library instruction program funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities was supervised by the University Librarian.

The University Librarian's Council, consisting of seven division heads and the Assistant to the University Librarian, served as an advisory decision-making body to the University Librarian. The management style was collegial and participative, characterized by frequent, yet unproductive, meetings devoted to philosophical discussions and debates over major and minute library issues. The decision-making process was diffused and slow. Consequently, the health of the Libraries as a public service organization suffered under democratic spirit and process. Library operations became ineffectual and inefficient. The organization's service goals appeared to be out of focus. Dedicated library administration, faculty, and staff were concerned about the future and the public image of the organization.

MRAP Process

Initiation of Change

During 1977-79 library personnel experienced frustration and self-doubt due to various internal problems and an unstable

external political environment. MRAP was considered by the University Librarian as an internal change strategy. He formally initiated the program in November, 1979, with full support from the university administration. In addition, a commitment from the top university administrators was also secured for potential change. The availability of consultants from the Office of Management Studies provided competent technical and professional support for the project.

A study team of seven persons, representing both faculty and classified staff working in different areas of the university libraries, was chosen by the University Librarian from a list of candidates nominated by the Library faculty and staff. The study team carried out and directed all activities of the Program with the training and guidance of the OMS consultants.

The First Phase began with a general analysis which was conducted from January through March 1980. It covered an environmental analysis, a historical review, an analysis of the library's mission, goals, and objectives, and a needs assessment. An 87% return of the needs assessment survey showed the level of cooperation and enthusiasm of library personnel.

At the conclusion of the first phase, the study team identified six major concerns for detailed analysis. To accomplish this, six task forces were formed to review organizational structure, leadership and supervision, communications, planning and budgeting, personnel, and automation and technology. Each task force was made up of five to seven persons

drawn from volunteer faculty and staff. Members of the study team chaired these task forces.

The Second Phase conducted from May through December 1980 was devoted to an analysis of major concerns. During this phase, a detailed study of the library organization was made, and was eventually recorded in the Final Report of the Task Force on Organization to the Study Team. It listed the problem of the university library organization as follows:[20]

1. The relation of the University Librarian to the Dean for Academic Planning and Faculty Development is regarded as an unnecessary, formal interruption in the logical chain of command...

2. The lines through which authority is delegated by the University Librarian are unclear and inconsistently used. The divisional reporting structure confuses the locus of accountability, impedes effective communication, encourages rivalry, delays decision making, and prohibits flexibility in staffing patterns and resource allocation.

3. The University Librarian is assisted in decision making by the Librarian's Council. The body, consisting of seven division heads, the University Librarian, and the Assistant to the Librarian, assists and advises the University Librarian in initiating, reviewing or recommending policy. Yet the status of decisions reached is not always clear...since they often represent a compromise of conflicting interests, and approaches, sometimes requiring lengthy deliberations.

4. The position of Division Head seems to have evolved into one of increasing importance and decreasing effectiveness...

5. Generally, the costs of benefits received from maintaining remote branch libraries is questionable insofar as the branches require a duplication of materials and function...

The Third Phase began in January, 1981 with the study team examining and correlating the Task Force reports and recommenda-

tions, and revising the Interim Report. A final report was released on February 27 with key recommendations and Task Forces' recommendations on all areas of major concerns.

Design of Flexible Plan for Change

The Task Force on Organization recommended that the University Librarian's position be changed to Dean of University Libraries. With this change, the Libraries was made on equal footing with other colleges in the university governance system and formal planning process. It also expressed what appeared to be a consensual mandate from all groups of library personnel: similar functions should be combined. The recommendations called for "like" functions to be consolidated. Two fiscal year contract appointments were recommended for new positions: a Director of Public Services and a Director of Technical Services.

The Task Force deferred the details of any physical relocation or modification entailed by its recommendation, since it perceived its recommendations only as a guide for setting the direction of organizational change. A Proposed Table of Organization was presented at that time.

The University Librarian accepted key recommendations in principle on April 13, 1981. A seven-member Implementation Team of library faculty and staff was formed on May 6, 1981, and operated on the basis of recommendations from the Study Team. The Implementation Team met and issued several progress reports in regard to several minor changes made. Library personnel again experienced frustration and unrest due to lack of a clear design

or plan for change and adoption, as they are essential in any change process. Then, the resignation of the University Librarian put the plan on hold. While the University Libraries conducted a national search for a Dean, they were was administered by an Acting University Librarian.

Adoption

On December 12, 1983, the new Dean of University Libraries, who had served as Chair of the Task Force on Organization, issued a report: MRAP: A Summary of Progress, and discharged the Implementation Team at the recommendation of the Department Chair[21]. Since then, the responsibilities of all operations were put in the hands of the Dean of University Libraries and a new decision-making body, the Library Management Group. The Group consists of the Dean, two Directors[22] (Public Services and Technical Service), the Chief Bibliographer[23], the Business Manager, and the Department Chairperson. The six-member management group provided leadership and direction for all library operations including the process of reorganizing to implement the changes recommended by MRAP. Along functional lines, all unit heads attend weekly Public Services Council or Technical Services Council meetings to communicate and solve common operational issues and concerns. Minutes of these Council meetings are distributed library-wide.

Implementation

After the appointment of the Dean of the University Libraries and the creation of two fiscal year appointments (The

Director of Public Services and the Director of Technical Services) in 1982, the reorganization of Ball State University Libraries proceeded at an accelerated speed. The reorganization was based on functional lines with main emphasis on achieving functional efficiency by trying to do more with less.[24] The actual reorganization is seen in the numerous mergers of "like" functions and activities in both Public and Technical Services. There were efforts to eliminate sunk costs which absorb both fiscal and human resources with little operational returns.[25]

The expansion of the initial cataloging systems function into other units envisioned by the MRAP Study Team has become a reality through the efforts and conviction of the Dean of University Libraries. Library automation won the top funding priority in the university-wide planning process. INNOVACQ was installed for acquisitions and fiscal control in April 1986. A contract with Carlyle, Inc. was signed in January 1987 for a total integrated, automated system. The naming of a Library Automation Coordinator (later renamed as Director of Library Automation Systems) who reports directly to the Dean of University Libraries and serves on the Dean's Advisory Council reflects the present importance of library automation.

From September 24, 1987 to August 30, 1989, the Online Public Access Catalog (OPAC) of Carlyle Inc. was available to the public. However, due to Carlyle's uncertain financial situation and, most of all, the announcement of a common choice of NOTIS systems by several major Indiana academic libraries for a state-

wide library resource network, the University President decide o purchase and install the IBM-based NOTIS. The transition to a NOTIS system was fairly smooth, given the experience gained with Carlyle during the previous two years.

Since September 1, 1989, a NOTIS Online Public Catalog has been fullly functional. Ramdom-barcoding of new library materials also began in June 1988, and barcoding most of the library collections with smart barcodes was completed in six weeks on August 17, 1990. An automated NOTIS circulation system will soon be implemented.

Observations

Ball State University Libraries has changed from a broad-based divisional structure to a classical, functional structure. The current organizational structure resembles one of Golembiewski's organizational models with its emphases on differentiation, repression (control of deviant individual behavior), stability and function. The emphases on formal channels of communication, rules and procedures are used to coordinate effectively the various activities within a complex service organization.

The creation of a Deanship, two Assistant Deanships (Public Services & Technical Services), and three Directorships (Collections Development, Library Automation Systems, and Library Business Affairs) has changed the organization to a classical mode with varying degrees of Weberian bureaucratic characteristics: 1) Authority became vertical; 2) Departments were organized by functions; 3) Formal reporting replaced informal

methods of communication; 4) The emphasis on written documents in the management of office was stressed; and 5) the revision of each Job descriptions was done to designate position authority, responsibilities, and line of report.

The Implementation Team failed to carry out the change-process due to lack of legitimate leadership and administrative authority. And ultimately, it failed because the participative model of decision-making was not effective in reaching a consensual design for change, adaptation, and implementation.

The present library administration was able to implement the remainder of the organizational change-process under a much stronger leadership position, with the blueprint provided by the Management Review and Analysis Program. With the Library Deanship, the University Libraries is in a more viable position to voice its needs and priorities to serve the university and the community. Changes in the larger political environment of the university toward greater accountability from all professionals also influences present library administration.

To achieve greater efficiency and effectiveness, Ball State University Libraries' administration undertook numerous changes beyond the physical and administrative reorganization. Most notable among these measures of all is the "Professional Personnel" status option offered to recently employed professional librarians. Currently half of the forty professional librarians employed are on this non-tenured-track fiscal-year contract. Beginning July 1, 1986, the majority of other faculty librarians'

contractual status was changed from a nine-month contract with optional summer employment, to an extended fiscal year contract of 190 work days scheduled throughout the fiscal year. Since 1985, all library personnel have been subjected to a mandatory annual performance evaluation. The goal-oriented management style of the present library administration is reflected in the performance-evaluation instruments used and the evaluation process which emphasizes the achievement of individual objectives. The results of annual evaluation become the bases for an expanding "market" and "merit" pay, and reinforce the concepts of responsibility and authority.

The impact of major organizational change was not only shown, but also felt at all levels of Ball State University Libraries. It is seen in the alternate organizational structure (from divisional to functional), and management mode (from participative to rationally goal-oriented). It is also manifest in the strategy of the organization from present to future-oriented to compete in a changing environment.

McFeely equates organizational change to organizational health. His theory is reflected in this case-study of Ball State University Libraries since its MRAP. The success of the organization is measured by attained results, and its ability to formulate a suitable internal structure and work environment in response to the relevant external environment. Bureaucratic structure is only a means to achieve the end as maintained by Beverly P. Lynch's organizational theory.

Conclusion

The impact of organizational change is vital to a public service organization. This case study of organizational change in Ball State University Libraries due to the Management Review and Analysis Program illustrates the apparent effect of planned organizational change.

In a campus survey prepared by the Office of Career Services and administered to associate and bachelor degree graduates of Ball State, the University Libraries has been ranked as the most used service and as the service organization providing the highest level of user satisfaction for six consecutive years.

An improvement in the library administration's effectiveness and the efficiency of the libraries' services in recent years has been achieved largely through planned organization change, strong leadership, and revitalized efforts of all library personnel. The physical reorganization of the University Libraries is only what is visible to the outsider. Internally, the health of the organization is evident not only in its greater visibility and increased productivity of all personnel but also in its responsiveness to the changing environment.

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